

Trinity Church
651 Pequot Road
Southport
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-312

HABS
CONN,
1- SOUPO,
22-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-312

TRINITY CHURCH (P.E.)

HABS
CONN, 1-SOUPD, 22

Location:

651 Pequot Road (southeast corner of Pequot Road and Center Street), Southport, Fairfield County, Connecticut.

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.644010.4555100.

Present Owner
and Occupant:

Episcopal Society of Fairfield.

Present Use:

Religious services and church offices.

Statement of
Significance:

Trinity Church of Southport was designed by Bridgeport and Cincinnati architect Albert C. Nash and erected during the years 1854-56. Because of the building's near total destruction by wind during a tornado on January 1, 1862, the church was completely rebuilt as originally planned, with a few structural alterations. The simple rectangular block is topped by a pitched roof and fronted by a central tower and slender polygonal spire. The tower parapet with Gothic corner pinnacles and the crenelated roof parapet enrich while softening the austere appearance of the front facade's symmetrical arrangement and the regularity which pervades the total design. Trinity is an excellent work of early Gothic Revival church architecture in wood, patterned after Ithiel Town's model Trinity Church (1814-17) in New Haven and Benjamin Latrobe's Christ Church (1808) in Washington, D.C. This mode was quite popular through the rural Northeast after the first decades of the 19th century with the colonies' toleration of religious diversity and the Episcopal Church's subsequent expansion. This building was the fifth church erected by the Episcopal Society of Fairfield; the first was built in Mill Plain in 1725 when the Congregational Faith and Order was still the established church of Connecticut (remaining so until the early 19th century). The parish has grown in numbers and activeness since its beginnings here in the 1850s and remains a strong centralizing force within the community to the present day.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1854-56; virtually rebuilt 1862.

2. Architect: Albert C. Nash (1826-1890).
Albert C. Nash was born in 1826. He began his architectural practice in Bridgeport, Connecticut, probably circa 1853-54, and his only design known to survive in the Bridgeport area is Trinity Church in Southport. He moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin ca. 1856-57, moving on to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1867, where he lived the rest of his life. Nash is best known in Cincinnati for his church architecture, including the Church of the Atonement, Church of the Advent, the Central Christian and Unitarian Churches, the Baptist and Congregational Churches on Walnut Hill, and the Presbyterian Church in Clifton, Ohio. While his most prominent works are church designs, Nash was also recognized for his commercial and domestic architecture in the area: the Cincinnati Hospital, the Carlisle Building, the St. Clair and St. Nichols Hotels, the Carlisle Estate and the A.H. Hinkle mansion in Mt. Auburn, Ohio.

Nash's professional colleagues wrote of him in The Inland Architect and New Record in August 1890: "Nash was successful more in planning than in exterior or interior decoration." As a student of scientific technology, he placed a stronger emphasis in his own work upon practical technique and method rather than the aesthetics of style and design. "In the preparation of his sketches," the Inland Architect article continued, "he had a manner peculiar to himself, for he always made the preliminary sketches on paper that had been ruled by light blue lines into quarter inch squares, and this paper seldom saw the T square or the triangle."

In his capacity as a practicing member of the architectural profession, Nash served as President of the Cincinnati A.I.A. Chapter from 1873 until 1876, and again during 1882-89. He died at his residence on Walnut Hill on July 15, 1890 at the age of sixty-four.

Honoring their fellow colleague, members of the local A.I.A. chapter wrote in 1890, "Mr. Nash was the friend of the young architect, and more than one young man just starting on his professional career owes much to Mr. Nash because of timely advice, and of encouragement and even of that more substantial commodity known as a 'job' . . . He was a gentleman and a scholar. He was polite and warm-hearted, and being a ready speaker, he was always looked to to represent his brethren at any public gathering."

3. Original and subsequent owners: Episcopal Society of Fairfield acquired the corner lot upon which the church stands from Harriet Dimon on May 22, 1854.
4. Original plan and construction: A Building Committee of five Parish members was appointed on March 18, 1854 to supervise the construction of the church. This committee

consisted of Moses Bulkley, Jonathan Godfrey, Augustus Jennings, William Bulkley and Allen Nichols. The minutes and letters of this committee serve as the record of Trinity's original design.

March 13, 1854

"Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting of the Episcopal Society of Fairfield will be held at the District School house in Southport on Saturday 18th inst at One oclock P.M. to take action in regard to building a church."

March 18, 1854

"Meeting assembled agreeably to warning Called to order by the Clerk Abel Beers Appointed Chairman Rev. J.S. Purdy offered up Prayers - - Voted that in any and all outlays made by this Society for the building the Church edifice there be no tax laid for the same. Voted the Wardens & Vestry be instructed to procure a Suitable room and make such arrangements as is necessary for the accommodation of the Parish - On motion of Capt. And. Bulkley Voted that a Committee of five be appointed to take all necessary steps in procuring plans, obtaining the means and contracting for such a building as the Society shall here after direct. - Voted Andrew Bulkley was appointed but was excused. Moses Bulkley, Jon Godfrey, Augustus Jennings, Wm. Bulkley, and Allen Nichols be the Committee Voted that the Committee back their estimates on a Wood building to cost about \$8000 and also obtain information in regard to a stone building Voted that there be side galleries in sd building and that the Committee obtain information in regard to a basement and also the expense of a lecture room above ground."

April 1, 1854

"Committee reported and presented a sketch of a building similar to one building Stamford - Voted that the Committee be instructed to procure estimates and further plans of the [illegible] building 47 by 80 and report at a further meeting, Voted that the Wardens & Vestry with the Chairman Capt Beers and Wm Bulkley determine the bounds of the Church lot before Wm. Wakeman completes his fence -"

April 15, 1854

"Meeting called to order by the clerk Wm Bulkley appointed chairman Committee reported that they had made further investigations and had a sketch drawn and employed Mr. Nash the architect to complete plans and specifications and presented them before the Meeting---"

September/
October 1854

"Your Committee Appointed to Contract for a Church edifice have thought it proper to request this call of a Parish meeting to lay before you their acts and doings and if they receive your sanctions will carry forward to completion as per contracts made. To say there has been a difference of opinions in the Committee relative to various points is well known to you all and without a prospect of being now united we feel reluctant to proceed with the undertaking. After some delay a contract was made with Messrs. Sherman & Jelliff for \$9,750 from [illegible] without basement or lecture room above ground These two points conceded the prospect was favorable for on proceeding in harmony before the stone work was completed the subject of basement was again brought up urged and insisted upon by one of the Committee against the views and wishes of the other four. The subject of Lecture room and basement was again reconsidered and 4 of the Committee were unanimous in regard to a room for the same for the sum of \$700 - and directed the plans to be drawn by the architect accordingly which are now completed and the Contractors are ready to proceed with the lecture room at once to work at the main building. After the site was changed a majority of your Committee from an investigation personally made and from the opinions expressed by those competent to judge decided in favor of a lecture room above ground for the following reasons which they considered to outweigh the difference in the cost, and first because a lecture room above ground you could get high ceiling, better ventilation, more convenient access and the arrangement for vestry room could be better adapted to both church and lecture room has been proposed to draw away the earth from one half the main thus exposing a brick or stone front in part, to the main building on the sides as well as one end impairing as your committee believes

the looks & styles of the building & grounds--"

October 3, 1854 Letter from A.C. Nash, Architect, to Augustus Jennings, Clerk of the Building Committee.

"In answer to your note of yesterday I would say that I am happy to learn by it that you have almost concluded to abandon the basement and place the Lecture room on the rear - There can be no objection to lowering the floor as you proposed - although it will not certainly add to the appearance externally it will help the internal arrangement as regards chancel window etc -, . . . In regard to the basement partly of brick and remainder stone I must be allowed to put in my protest - for very many reasons this would be objectionable - the variety of material in the building would give the church the appearance of one having been built by donations of materials & labor instead of money & if I know the Southport people this would not suit them - to be sure the brick might be painted but never to endure and never to look like stone - stone might be used & then comes the spoiling of a beautiful piece of ground - the church out of ground so much more at one end than the other would not look trim & the work would appear very much out of level - & certainly nothing could be neater than a nicely graded lot - particularly for a church - then the icy steps for winter evening meetings & the host of objections to the basement - I should most assuredly hold up both hands for the lecture room in the rear - for convenience & looks - Let it be placed 8 or 16 inches lower than floor of audience room with steps inside & a slight grade outside -" A.C. Nash (Signed)

October 30, 1854 "After some discussion it was moved that the vote of the house be taken whether they will have a lecture room above ground - a basement or have either lecture room or basement Vote 3 favor of Lecture room, 4 in favor basement, 17 in favor the Church without either Voted that the building Committee be instructed to build the Church according to Contract without basement or lecture room and grade the same to the underpinning all around."

November 3, 1854 "Resolved that the Building Committee be instructed to furnish and complete the building, according to Contract and using Chestnut or butternut for seats instead of pine if it can be done on terms satisfactory to the Committee passed-
Mr. Pomeroy moved that the Building Committee be instructed to construct for a Vestry room in the rear of the Church and the glazing of the whole window in the rear of the building be of stained glass provided the additional expense be reused independent of the general subscription paper."

September 15,
1854

"The undersigned having had the matter principally in charge - respectfully submit the papers, Subscription, etc etc, pertaining to the purchase and payment of the Bell. - placed in the tower of the new church Sept 25 1855, cost etc

Jones & Hitchcock, Tory, N.Y. Bill on file
Sept 15, 1855

One Bell 2000 lbs at 30¢	\$600.00
Hangings-----	71.00
Expense and from Southport	6.10
	<u>\$677.10</u>

November 3, 1855 "Report of the Matters of building a vestry room, seating the church with oak, etc - The Society of Trinity Church. at a meeting held Nov 3 1855. having Voted - that a Vestry room be built in the rear of the church that the seats be of oak - and that the whole of the Chancel [illegible] may be of Stained Glass. provided that the cost of the same be raised and [illegible] of the general Subscription paper - The undersigned at the suggestion of Jon. Godfrey, Andrew Bulkley, and others, and, the consent of the Building Committee Contracted with Sherman & Jelliff, 'to seat the church with oak without pew doors - and to build a Vestry room for --- \$215.' (Note: the original price included the glazing the windows and was for \$270 - but it was subsequently decided to have a better quality of glass, etc. and \$55 being allowed by S \$ J as the estimate of the cost, the present window was contracted for by the Rector, and paid for as will appear by his report.-"

January 9, 1856 "I hereby Certify that I put up in Trinity Church Southport Connecticut a Furnace on the Carolic principle, which I consider to be perfectly safe, as it is put up in the best manner of the best Materials and in every way on the most approved principle."
New York Jany 9 1856, E.W. Waters"

January 21, 1856 "Voted That Capt J. Godfrey and Capt. Andrew Bulkley be a committee to grade the church lot, Lay out Walks, Set out Trees, and Horse Posts as Soon as the weather will permit in the Spring. Voted that Persons living out of the place shall have the privelege of building horse Sheds for their own convenience, in the rear of the Church."

December 28,
1856

"New York. Dec 28th 1856 Received of Revd J.S. Purdy and Benjm Pomeroy Committee Twelve Hundred Dollars in full payment for the organ just put up in Trinity Church Southport, and which according to our contract. We guarantee in all respects and stipulate to keep the Same in tune for on year from the date hereof - and to furnish a competent organist to play on the day, said Church is Consecrated without Charge." E & G.G. Hook (Signed)

As originally constructed during 1854-56 the church building was rectangular with a projecting central vestibule at the front and a chancel at the rear, and measured forty feet (three-bay front) by one-hundred feet. Erected upon a stone foundation, the main auditorium section rose two stories and was supported by a timber frame. The square frontal tower, rising two stories above the gable ridge with stylized Gothic pinnacles defining each of the four corners, was topped by a tall, slender polyganol steeple. At the base a wide Tudor-arched doorway, leading into the vestibule, was flanked on either side by matching Tudor doorways. Lancet windows filled with plain glazing punctuated the three bays at the second level. All openings were topped by Gothic drip moldings.

5. Builders, suppliers, etc: Many people were involved in the construction of the original 1854 church. Following is an exhaustive account of the expenses incurred in building Trinity, thus an excellent catalogue of those who hired out their services.

To paid Harriet Dimon for Land	\$301.90
Sherman & Jelliff Bill (Labor etc)	118.55
Sylvester Davenport	15.00

John Conrads (Bill of stone)	200.00
Daria Banks (Bill for Labor)	15.00
R.I. Roberts bill Cement	11.50
Wakeman Baldwin (bill)	1.25
John Mills & Co LABOR	48.00
John Socklin "	4.69
Chas. Cane "	9.69
Uriah Hubbill "	4.50
Edward Eddy for stone	9.50
A.C. Nash / plans & Specifications	118.75
Edward Keegan Labor	4.78
John Squire "	1.88
Dillagon Thorp "	53.81
WM Hamilton "	5.94
Timothy N. Bulkley Labor	28.88
Patric Griffen "	1.25
A.D. Marks "	5.69
John Conrad "	7.00
Patic Seeley "	19.62
Matthew Symmott "	6.25
Isaac Beers "	1.25
Saml. Pike bill of Stone etc	12.32
David Hawkins Labor	61.69
Dillagon Thorp	23.43
David C. Hawkins, Jr.	17.58
Patric Griffen	21.33
Sherman & Jelliff, Contract for Building	9750.00
John Conrad Bill for Stone	52.74
CHe. Cane Bill of Labor	3.75
WM Coleman	123.37
for well	12.00
WM Bulkley bill for Stone	77.40
Pomeroy & Wakeman Sherwood painting	5.00
" " " " "	10.00
David Banks Labor	7.50
pd Insurance on Building	18.00
pd [illegible] etc Furnace for Labor	2.37
pd Furnace	.50
Edward Henshaw	35.14
[Illegible] & Harry Hull	63.00
Insurance on Building	61.25
Insurance on Building	16.62
Cleaning Church	21.00
Bill of Furnace	154.00
E.T. Halls bill for Furnace	85.59
Renewing Note at Bank	10.50
" " "	10.50
" " "	15.50
Sherman & Jelliff bill for Railing	57.78
Stephen Bulkley painting	2.00
WM Coleman	6.00
Renewing Note at Bank	15.50

Discount on renewing Note	12.40
Jon Godfrey bill for grading	164.96
Int. on J.G. Wakeman's chk.	.50
David Banks bill for Labor	44.00
Jon Godfrey building	16.00
E.T. Halls	43.38
John Conrads	57.81
Saml. Pikes bill for Brick	15.00
	<u>\$12,364.04</u>
Interest on Note at Bank	15.50
Amt. donated to Society	<u>\$12,379.54</u>
	898.82
	<u>\$13,278.41</u>

6. Alterations and additions: On the evening of January 1, 1862 a tornado came through Southport, striking the church's steeple and blowing it down through the roof. Because the destruction was so complete, the edifice had to be virtually rebuilt. John H. Sherwood, Trinity's Parish Clerk wrote on January 1: "At evening the wind changed to northwest and increased to a fearful gale and near the hour of Ten when all was quiet except the raging wind the beautiful spire of the church yielding to the blast fell upon the Building crushing it so badly that a more complete wreck could not be portrayed." Rev. Edmund Guilbert recounted the event in Annals of an Old Parish (1898, p. 128). "The destruction of the Church proved to be complete. The east wall would also have fallen quite as far but for the interposition of a venerable oak, which served as a prop to hold it up. Singular to relate, the organ was unharmed, as was the altar within the chancel; and the great window of stained glass above it."

To the Parish's credit, they began the process of rebuilding the church within the week. Following is a detailed account of this process as recorded in the Trinity Parish Minutes and preserved receipts.

January 8, 1862 "Resolution Presented by H. Sturges and after much discussion and amendment Voted as follows. That J. Godfrey, Julius Pike and George M. Hawkins be a Committee to procure a plan and specifications for building on the site of the one blown down a Church Building of the same size and with such improvements as their experience suggests etc to get proposals for building the same and make their Report to this Society on Saturday the 18th of the present month."

January 18, 1862 "Building Committee, report that in the present state of things they were unable to get estimates for building, But would advise the Parish to build by the day, working in old materials where expedient."

TIMBER

March 20, 1862	pd to Bradley Merwin for hing. timber 28 days of work at \$1.50	\$42.00
March 26, 1862	bought of John Burr 358 feet of Chestnut timber at 10 cts	35.80
March 28, 1862	pd to Charles H. Wilson for timber	79.40
April 1, 1862	pd to John Renis for scoring timber 16 days of work	14.25
April 2, 1862	pd to Tyler Wakeman for scoring timber	13.00
April 5, 1862	pd to Equaraim H. Burr for 376-1/2 feet timber	37.65
April 9, 1862	pd to H.D. Burn for timber from Dimon Hill	33.40
May 10, 1862	pd to ----Bradley, scoring timber 4 days	5.00
	pd to ----Nichols, scoring timber 3 days	4.64
	pd to Tyler Wakeman, scoring timber 5 days	5.50
May 22, 1862	pd to Henry G. Wilson one hemlock stick 33 ft at 14/c per foot 210 feet Chestnut timber carting same to SouthPort colum caps for Church	4.62 6.50 1.00 24.00
		<u>\$35.92</u>
		<u>.50</u>
		\$35.42
June 4, 1862	pd to Ephraim Jennings for 415-3/4 feet Timber	47.82

August 11, 1862 pd to Ogden & Co., Mahogany and
Lumber Dealers, for oak boards \$69.08

ROOFING

June 2, 1862 "I propose to lay the roof on the Trinity
Church, Southport, Ct. as follows
With Green & Purple Slate, alternating
rows horizontally. Slate of the first
quality from Vermont quarries With four
galvanized nails in each slate. Slate to
be 22 inches long, laying 9-1/2 inches to
weather: or 24 inches long, laying 10-1/2
inches to weather. Withall the trimmings
complete. Warrented secure and tight: for
\$7.00 pr 100 feet, & \$15.00 discount on the
job. Trimmings to be of the best and most
approved kind." E.W. Wing [Signed]

August 14, 1862 pd to E.W. Wing \$395.51
less \$120 275.00

September 23,
1862 pd to Jnnings Brothers, Dealers
in Paper Stock and Roofing Felts 7.25

VARNISH

June 26, 1862 pd to Campbell & Thayer, Manufacturers
of Linseed Oil 47.03

August 13, 1862 pd to Campbell & Thayer 36.34

October 4, 1862 pd to Campbell & Thayer 39.94

October 24, 1862 pd to Henry Waldron & Co., 5 gals.
dopal varnish 17.59

December 27,
1862 pd to Campbell & Thayer 29.02

NAILS

June 20, 1862 pd to Thomas Hawley & Co., Dealers
in English & American Hardware, Cut
and Wrought Nails, and Agricul-
tural Implements
2 Kegs 3 five nails \$11.00
15 " aph 0 52.50 63.50
less 3% 3.17
60.33

PLASTER

August 20, 1862	pd to R. Murray, Jr., Wholesale and Retail Dealer in Hay, Straw, Oats, Ground Feed, Etc. 12 Rits Calcined Plaster	\$16.50
September 10, 1862	pd to R. Murray, Jr. 6 Rits Plaster	8.25
September 23, 1862	pd to R. Murray, Jr. 6 Rits Calcined Plaster	8.25

WINDOWS

October 22, 1862	pd to Henry Sharp, Dr., Manufacturer of Stained Glass "for repairing window stained glass 4 heads of windows freight cartage	38.00 12.00 1.25 <u>.75</u> 52.00
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REPAIR OF ORGAN

November 14, 1862	pd to Messrs. E. & G.G. Hook for repairing and tuning organ	129.35
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CONSTRUCTION

July 1, 1862	pd to Sherman & Jelliff	40.00
July 17, 1862	" "	100.00
August 3, 1862	" "	64.00
October 7, 1862	" "	100.00
October 23, 1862	" "	50.00
November 14, 1862	" "	25.00

LIME AND CEMENT

November 14, 1862	pd to Albert Wood, Lime for Church	85.26
December 26, 1862	pd to Joseph Jennings & Son, for Lime, cement, oil and salt	35.53

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

"List of materials used in addition to the old saved from the ruins:"

Forest timber	Stained Glass
other timber	4 heads for side windows
Lime and cement	Green Baize for doors
Sand	Pew Plates
Stone	nails etc
Plaster	plank
pd for Ropes	Shingles
Oil Varnish etc	Boards, Lath etc
Iron Work	Labor
Glass	Sawing and turning bill
putty	Bills for Carting
Felt for Roof	Repairing Organ
Slate	Expenses for raising

December 29, 1862

"The Building Committee would report to the parish, that in obedience to the resolution at the meeting of January 18th, last, they began their work on Monday, the 20th of January. The first thing which was done, was to find timber fitted for the new building. The timbers of the spire, and roof, being long and large, it required much time to find such as were in all respects suitable. After they were found they were prepared and put upon the ground. The ruins of the former Church were then cleared up, and an examination made of the foundation, the floor, and the remaining portions of the tower. After this examination was made, and opinions were received from those who were competent to give them, your committee came to the conclusion that the foundation the floor, and the remaining portion of the tower, were in all respects sufficient to build upon again. In order, however, to make the matter doubly sure, your committee determined to strengthen the tower part by putting in two additional timbers, reaching from the foundation of the tower to the bell deck, and having connection with the rafters. After an examination of Churches and spires recently built, your committee concluded that the roof should be made steeper by five feet, and be framed and supported on an entirely different principle; further, that the spire should be framed and covered in a different way from the former one. As the building now stands,

the roof and all its weight, is independent of the sides of the Church. The only wight that now rests upon the floor, is that of the seats, and the congregation when it occupies them. It was also determined to carry out the corners of the church, so as to make it square, and have the whole building under one roof. Your committee have had before them from the beginning to the end of this work, the idea of strength, both in materials used, and mode in which they were put together; and they believe that the plan on which the present Church is built, is not only the stronger, but is at the same time one which is most proper and fit for the Temple of God."

Minor repairs and alterations were completed on the church between 1862 and 1891. Following is a chronological record of these changes. Unless otherwise noted, the items quoted appeared in the Fairfield "Advertiser" newspaper.

- December 17, 1866 The Parish "Voted that the present pulpit be dispensed with and a stand [lecturn] be substituted."
- September 20, 1871 The Southport "Chronicle" reported that it "is now proposed to encircle the Trinity Church grounds with a beautiful iron railing, somewhat similar to the one around the Congregational Church in Fairfield." On June 19, 1872 the "Chronicle" noted that "a new iron fence is being put around Trinity church."
- September 20, 1871 "All lovers of the beautiful will be pleased to know that Trinity Church Southport is about to be painted."
- October 25, 1871 The "Chronicle" wrote, "We are pleased to announce that the long expected 'painting' of Trinity Church is now in process of accomplishment. The building has already been nearly covered with the first 'coat.'"
- December 22, 1883 At the parish meeting it was "resolved, that a committee be appointed with reference to improvement in the manner of lighting the Church, and that they be authorized to introduce some of the new methods now in use, and to solicit subscriptions to pay for the same, all work to be done under the approval of the Vestry."

July 3, 1884	"The new lights will be in operation in Trinity church, next Sunday," reported the Fairfield "Advertiser."
July 10, 1884	"The gas was lighted in Trinity Church on Monday evening. There are 36 lights in each chandelier and a large light also in front of the church." ("Advertiser")
July 17, 1884	"The Gas Co., not having completed their work, the lights in Trinity church were not used Sunday evening. It is hoped the company will have them ready for next Sunday."
August 7, 1884	"They are very much pleased with the new lights in Trinity church. The reflectors are very superior. . . . Under the galleries are two side-lights which prove very suitable, and look well." ("Advertiser")
July 16, 1885	"The work of erecting a new cross on the spire of the Episcopal church has been commenced."
August 6, 1885	"The cross on the spire of the Episcopal Church will be put in place today or tomorrow."
August 13, 1885	"The cross on the spire of Trinity church was put up on last Friday."
August 24, 1888	"Trinity Church has caught the fever of improvements, and general renovation of the exterior is planned. Some needed work on the interior will probably be under taken next season."
September 7, 1888	"An investigation of Trinity Church tower and steeple, has put an end to the idea that there was any serious decay. A few of the sheathing boards were found to be rotten, but the timber and sills are as sound as when first put in place. A leak was found about the bell-deck which was remedied."
November 9, 1888	"Work upon Trinity Church has been begun, and the painters have nearly completed the first coat upon the steeple."

November 23, 1888 "The painting of Trinity Church is progressing very slowly. The chimney is being repaired and extended to improve the draft."

December 13, 1888 "Despite the severe weather the painters are rushing the work upon Trinity Church, and the first coat is nearly complete and part of the second is on the steeple."

On April 22, 1889 the parish of Trinity Church resolved "that a committee of three be appointed to consider the plans for improving and decorating the interior of the Church and to raise the necessary funds for that purpose and to report from time to time, their doings to the vestry." Though the Fairfield "Advertiser" reported on May 10, 1889 that "extensive improvements in Trinity Church are being planned for the summer," remodeling was not begun until the summer of 1891. Following is a record of this undertaking.

May 21, 1891 "Sunday Rev. Dr. Guilbert made an appeal for funds to decorate the church. The committee, appointed some time ago, was enlarged by the admission to it of a number of ladies. The ladies have succeeded in obtaining the \$1,500 wanted for the work, by subscription, in three days. The church will be redecorated, new carpets, cushions, for the pews purchased, and many other notable improvements made. An estimate of the cost of the decorations was given by Lamb of New York. The interior of the church will present a very fine appearance when finished."

CARPETS AND UPHOLSTERY

May 28, 1891 W & J Sloan
Broadway, 18th & 19th Sts.
Carpets & Upholstery

Outside and inside chancel	
102-3/4 yd velvet carpet	\$127.97
102-3/4 yd velvet trimming	1.85
expenses	2.50
	<hr/>
	\$132.32

September 1, 1891 Arnold, Constable & Co.
Importers & Dealers in Silks, Linens,
Shaws, Hosiery, Laces, Carpets,
Upholstery, etc.
Broadway, Corner of Nineteenth Street
New York

382 Agra carpet	77-1/2	295.05
51 Agra cpt.	77-1/2	45.73
covering "		8.50
372 lining		18.60
expenses to measure		<u>2.50</u>
		390.48

50 feet of continuous padding		3.00
[illegible] lining, 200		10.00
laying 95 yds chancel		4.75
" 45 yds matting in vestibule		2.25
laying 2 stairs to gallery		2.00
covering benches		10.00
3 fares		6.00
board and lodging		7.00
woman's time		2.50
woman's fare		<u>2.00</u>
		36.50

640 Feet of Cushions, furnishing new linings, @26 cet. per foot		166.40
covering 3 church chairs with plush new linings		16.25
covering 9 doors with felt		<u>5.00</u>
		\$187.65

DRAPES

June 23, 1891	Lord & Taylor Importers & Dealers in Foreign & Domestic Dry Goods	
	100 yds Damask	130.00
July 2, 1891	Lord & Taylor Damask	26.00
July 28, 1891	Lord & Taylor 22 Felt 110	24.20
	9 " "	9.90
		34.10
		<u>1.40</u>
		\$32.70

GLASS AND GLAZING

July 1891	Thomas Jones son, Dr. Embossed & Cut Glass Manufacturer 75, 77 & 79 Center St. Manufacturer of art stained glass
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Church windows a specialty
Silvered and unsilvered beveled plates

10	Leaded [illegible]	20-2/ x 10	
16	"		
18	"	17 x 24	
2	"	22-2/ x 27-4/	
2	"	22-2/ x 33-3/4	
			\$305.50

Extra opalescent border	25.00
[illegible] sash here	.50
4 days time putting lead on sash	14.00
	<u>\$345.00</u>

FURNISHINGS

July 11, 1891

J & R Lamb	
Church Furnishers and Memorial	
Art Worker	
Decoration of Church as per	
contract	695.00
Aug. 4 by cash	500.00
	P'd <u>\$195.00</u>

PLASTER AND CEMENT

June 15, 1891

Van Tassel, Masons & Builders	
To one day plastering	4.00
1 bushel plaster paris	1.20
1/2 bbl hair mortar	.50
1 pail Portland cement	.30
	<u>\$6.00</u>

SHIPPING MATERIALS

July 24, 1891	Freight on Glass	.25
July 26, 1891	Cash to men working on glass	2.00
July 27, 1891	Expressage in sash chain	.45
July 28, 1891	Expressage in sash chain	.45
July 30, 1891	Expressage in sash chain rt'd	.40
July 31, 1891	Expressage in glass	2.10
July 31, 1891	Expressage in Altar covering	.25
July 31, 1891	Expressage in carpet	.30
July 31, 1891	Expressage in carpet returned	.30
Aug. 1, 1891	Expressage in bell spring	2.00
Aug. 1, 1891	Expressage credence table	.45
Aug. 1, 1891	Expressage Stalls for chancel	13.00
		<u>\$11.95</u>

The total bill for remodeling was \$2638.30 and the total of all subscriptions received from parish members was \$2645.47. The church's renewed appearance was described by the Southport "Chronicle" on July 30, 1891: "After extensive alterations and repairing, the Episcopal church will be ready for occupancy Sunday morning, and the first service in six weeks will be held in the old place of worship, at the regular hour. A casual glance at the interior convinces one that the redecoration greatly enhances the beauty of the place, and the soft light falling through is very effective. Everything appears fresh and original, from the newly varnished pews to the uniquely patterned stencil work border, running around the four sides. The colors are quiet and harmonious, but not dull and ineffective. The alterations have been chiefly in re-decorating the walls, woodwork, pews, and arched ceiling, but the general effect from these changes is that a complete transformation in size and general shape of the interior has been made. Back of the pulpit heavy stained glass windows receive the flood of morning sun light, and throw all of the tints of the rainbow into the forward part of the church. The side windows have sufficient colored glass in them to off-set the glare of the main one so that all hours of the day, the light is good in every part of the church, but not glaring. New carpet of an excellent pattern covers the floor, and corresponds beautifully with the new cushions in the pew. Here and there on the sides of the galleries, and around the sides of the galleries, and around the pulpit, stencil work patterns relieve any monotony of decoration that might result from the conventional border. There are several little odd jobs to be attended to yet, but so far as the general effect of the decoration is concerned everything is complete and satisfactory."

In 1895, the Parish voted to purchase a new organ since the one acquired in 1854 was dated and in poor condition.

January 14, 1895 "After the reading of the resolution adopted by the Vestry recommending the purchase of a new organ - It was voted - That the Vestry be and hereby are authorized and empowered, to borrow, or appropriate, the sum of Fifteen Hundred (\$1500 x Dollars), for the purchase of a new organ - for the church -"

April 15, 1895 "The organ committee reported that a contract had been made with Mueller & Able of N.Y. for a new organ, to be ready by June 1st. Accepted."

May 13, 1895 "The old organ is being taken out of Trinity church today."

June 13, 1895

"The new organ for Trinity church has been finished, and set up in the show rooms of the builders, Messrs. Mueller & Abel, New York. For a few days it will be on exhibition there, and is eliciting words of warmest commendation from the musical elite of the metropolis, and all who view it or hear its tones. . . . As rapidly as possible the parts of the new organ will be put into place, and in a short time the sweet and powerful voice of the new instrument will be heard in the church."

July 18, 1895

The organ was dedicated at 8 P.M. on this date.

The Southport "Chronicle" recorded the dedication of the new organ on July 22: "Every seat in Trinity church was filled when on Thursday evening the new organ of the church was dedicated. . . . Promptly at 8 o'clock the services dedicatory were begun by the rector Dr. Guilbert. . . The main feature of any organ is, of course, the tone, which, in this instrument, is singularly rich and full. The voicing was the personal work of Mr. Fred Englefried, and the result is most gratifying. . . . The tone of the full organ is brilliant and massive. The excellence, durability and finish of the work in every detail, however insignificant, have been carried to the highest attainable point, and the instrument is, in every way, worthy of its builders and the church in which it stands."

Again, in 1901-02, the interior of the church was in need of repair. The following record is from accounts in the "Chronicle."

December 9, 1901

"Yesterday service was held in Trinity Chapel on account of the improvements being made on Trinity church."

January 2, 1902

"Work is still being done on Trinity church, although it proceeds slowly. In contrast with the antique exterior, the ornamentations inside will be of the most brilliant character, and when the church is again opened for services in February, it will be one of the handsomest, richest and really artistic in the country."

January 27, 1902

"The decorators have completed their work in Trinity church, and tile and marble workers now have their inning: With the completion of that work, carpenters and

painters will finish the improvements. It is now likely the work will be completed inside of a month."

After six months of repair work, the church was opened for services. Describing the alterations which were completed during this time, the "Chronicle" wrote, "The walls have been frescoed, the pews reconstructed and brought up-to-date and the wood work all cleaned and varnished. A new chancel . . . has been built by the congregation and a new altar given by Miss C.M. Bulkley in memory of her father and mother. . . . A large oil painting 8 x 12 feet subject, the Savior taken from Ary Scheppers famous picture Christus Consolator has also been added and is one of the new ornaments of the church. . . . The total cost of the improvements is estimated at \$4000."

In November 1911, the horse sheds at the rear of the building were removed; the church was electrified in February 1913. A new organ, made by M.P. Moller & Co., was installed in 1946, and in 1962, a new console and several ranks of pipes were added. The gallery organ was replaced again in December 1972. It was built by Karl Wilhelm in cooperation with the Swiss organ-builders, Metzler & Sons.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Roger Ludlowe, a prominent member of the New Haven Colony, had founded Fairfield in 1638-39 upon the principle of political autonomy, creating a form of town government which, in the 17th century, invited religious diversity. However, within the legal framework created by the colonial General Assembly, church and state were a seamless web and ecclesiastical and civil affairs of any province were inextricably bound together. Because the only faith which was permitted in public worship in Connecticut was the Congregational Faith and Order, all inhabitants were taxed by civil authorities for the support of the established church. Therefore, despite Ludlowe's hope for religious toleration in Fairfield, Congregationalism remained in place as the official faith. The liberal views of Fairfield townspeople were repeatedly dismissed by the conservative General Assembly.

This was especially trying for members of the Church of England who settled in Fairfield. They were compelled to support through taxation an institution to which they had no emotional attachment. Beyond this, they paid an additional psychological cost because their allegiance to the Anglican church clashed with the state's intolerance of religious diversity. Throughout the second half of the 17th century and the first quarter of the 18th, Fairfield Episcopalians continued to strive for religious freedom. The easing of frustration and persecution came in May 1727. Members

of the Anglican Church of Fairfield petitioned the General Assembly stating that ten of their number had been imprisoned for not honoring taxes levied to support the Congregational Order, and requested that they be freed from paying taxes. In response, the Assembly passed an act providing that taxes collected from Episcopalians should be paid to Episcopal missionaries. This was the first effective step towards religious toleration in Connecticut. Ultimately, the consequence of the state's grudging decision to tolerate religious diversity was the separation of Church and State.

The first church of the Episcopal Society of Fairfield was erected in 1725 in Mill Plain, during the rectorship of Rev. Samuel Johnson. This structure was actually built with the intention of being a temporary home due to Episcopalians' precarious status within the community at this time. With their growing strength, the inhabitants voted at a Town Meeting in July 27, 1738 to give "liberty to the members of the Church of England" to build a meetinghouse "on the highway near the Old Fairfield gate, about 80 rods eastward from the Prime Society's Meeting House." The edifice was erected that year.

On the night of July 8, 1779, during the American Revolution, Fairfield was burned and ravaged by Tory Loyalists of Rhode Island who landed at the Mill River harbor, destroying nearly all village property. The New London "Gazette" reported on August 4, "All the town from the bridge towards Stratford to Mill River (a few houses excepted) was consumed." Rev. Edmund Guilbert wrote of the insurrection in Annals of an Old Parish (1898): "In the course of the night, several houses were consumed and nearly all were plundered. Early the next morning the conflagration became general; over two hundred buildings, forty-eight stores and many barns, were turned to smoking heaps of ruins. As a climax, on leaving, the enemy set fire to everything that up to that time had escaped the flames. Both houses of worship, the Episcopal and the Congregational, were burned to the ground." (53-4) Trinity parish was again homeless. Not until 1789 was the congregation economically able to erect a new church to replace the one that burned. The building, located at Mill Plain, was dedicated September 5, 1790.

In time Southport gradually regained its lost prosperity, while also expanding numerically with the increase in harbor trade on the Mill River. Because of a growing Episcopalian congregation, a new parish chapel was begun in 1832 and completed in 1835. While the main church was in Mill Plain, Southport's central location within Fairfield and its own economic and demographic growth, drew the largest numbers to the new chapel. Unfortunately, the wooden porticoed structure was destroyed by fire on March 11, 1854, thereby initiating the plans for a new Trinity church, the structure which originally stood at the corner of Pequot Road and Main Street.

The congregation has grown in numbers and wealth, together with the village at large, and remains a strong, centralizing force within the community to the present day.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

View of facade, showing dark paint, no landscaping, and present church office building, ca.1890s. In Pequot Library's collection, File #38, 720 Pequot Road, Southport, Connecticut.

View of altar, showing stenciled walls, ca.1890s. In Pequot Library's collection, File #38, 720 Pequot Road, Southport Connecticut.

View of altar and chancel, showing stained-glass lancet window behind altar, ca.1890s. In Pequot Library's collection, File #38, 720 Pequot Road, Southport, Connecticut.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Minutes of Parish Meetings, Trinity, Church, Southport, Connecticut, 1854-1966.

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b. Secondary and published sources:

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Marquiss - Who's Who, Inc., 1963, p. 375.

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Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
February 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Trinity Church was designed by Bridgeport architect Albert C. Nash and erected 1854-56. The building was virtually destroyed by wind during a tornado on January 1, 1862, and completely rebuilt as originally planned with a few structural changes. The main rectangular mass is topped by a gable roof and fronted by a central tower and slender polygonal spire. The square tower parapet is articulated by Gothic corner pinnacles, and the crenelated roof parapet enriches the austerity of the facade's symmetrical design. Trinity is an excellent work of early Gothic Revival church architecture in wood.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent. As evidenced by the extensive alterations and repairs known to have been completed, the church has been very well maintained and thus preserved since constructed in 1854.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The two-story rectangular structure with a projecting central vestibule at the front and a chancel at the rear, measures 40' (three-bay front) x 100'.
2. Foundation: Ashlar sandstone masonry.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The front facade is covered with flush siding, and all other facades have clapboard siding. All surfaces are painted tan.

4. Structural system, framing: Timber frame construction. Roof joists are held by a high collar, now supplemented by metal rods, and rest on plates above the gallery piers and exterior walls.
5. Porches, stoops: Flagstone steps front the entry doorways.
6. Chimneys: A brick chimney rises above the roofline at the rear over the vestry room's door of the original section.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wide Tudor arched doorway, leading into the vestibule, is flanked on either side by matching Tudor doorways. All openings are topped by Gothic drip moldings.
 - b. Windows: Three lancet windows with wooden mullions punctuate the three front bays at the second level.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with wooden shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Crenelated roof parapet conceals front gable ends. A narrow cornice of Gothic label moldings trims sides.
 - c. Tower: Front central tower with slender polygonal spire. The tower's square parapet is articulated by Gothic corner pinnacles.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan: Simple rectangular auditorium plan with a central seating section flanked on either side by an aisle and gallery. A projecting chancel extends at the rear.
2. Stairways: Spiral stairs from the front vestibule to the upper-level galleries is trimmed with turned newels.
3. Flooring: Carpeting in the aisles and tile under the pews and in the vestibule.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceiling are plastered. Walls are scored to imitate ashlar masonry and articulated with plaster ribs.
5. Doorways: Three original oak doors between the vestibule and auditorium are trimmed with Gothic paneling. An oak paneled door leads into the vestry.

6. Decorative features and trim: Wainscoting of vertical boarding, beaded at the joint, is topped by Gothic label molding. Gothic arched panels trim the face of the oak parapet.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: Modern electrical fixtures.
 - b. Heating: Central heating system.
- D. Site: The church stands on the southeast corner of Center Street and Pequot Road, facing northwest.

Prepared by John G. Waite
Project Supervisor
and
David T. Van Zanten
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966, under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John G. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky) and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. Van Zanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in February 1979 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966 and May 1968.